Indoor Air Pollution

We all know how important it is to help clean and maintain air quality outside; but many people don’t realize that indoor air pollution is one of the fastest growing environmental problems we face today. The alarming fact is that electrical equipment, furniture, cleaning products and building materials all release trace amounts of toxins such as carbon monoxide, formaldehyde and benzene (a known carcinogen), into our homes and offices.

Growth Requirements

Keep in mind that different houseplants have different needs. Variables such as light, humidity, water and plant size are all important considerations when choosing houseplants. Please refer to care instructions or ask an employee for assistance when selecting the right air-cleansing houseplant for your home or office.

The Plant List

Aglaonema commutatum
CHINESE EVERGREEN
Aloe vera
Araucaria heterophylla
NORFOLK ISLAND PINE
Asplenium viviparum
MOTHER FERN
Chamaedorea elegans
PARLOR PALM
Chlorophytum comosum
SPIDER PLANT
Chrysalidocarpus lutescens
ARECA PALM
Codiaeum variegatum
CROTON
Ctenanthe oppenheimiana
NEVER-NEVER PLANT
Dieffenbachia seguine
DUMB CANE
Dracaena spp.
CORN PLANT, DRAGON TREE, JANET CRAIG, WARNECKII
Epipremnum aureum
GOLDEN POTHOS
Ficus benjamina
WEPPING FIG
Ficus elastica
RUBBER TREE
Howea forsteriana
KENTIA PALM
Monstera deliciosa
SWISS CHEESE PLANT, SPLIT-LEAF PHILODENDRON
Musa acuminate
DWARF BANANA
Nephrolepis e. ‘bostoniensis’
BOSTON FERN
Orchid Phalaenopsis, Dendrobium
Pepperomia spp.
Philodendron bipinnatifidum
TREE PHILODENDRON
Philodendron cordatum
HEART-LEAF PHILODENDRON
Pothos spp.
DEVIL’S IVY
Radermachera sinica
CHINA DOLL
Sansevieria trifasciata
SNAKE PLANT, MOTHER-IN-LAW TONGUE
Schlumbergera
CHRISTMAS CACTUS
Schefflera spp.
Spathiphyllum spp.
PEACE LILY
Houseplant Helpers

Houseplants are a wonderful way to beautify and cheer up your indoor spaces, but the fact that they are exceptional air purifiers is often overlooked. Houseplants improve air quality by absorbing toxins along with carbon dioxide. Within their leaves, microorganisms break down the chemicals naturally. The plants then release fresh, clean oxygen for us to breathe.

Studies have been done to measure the amount of pollutants filtered out by common houseplants. In some studies the plants were able to remove up to 80% of the pollutants! Some research even showed that not only were the leaves doing the work, but the roots also helped in the process.

One study conducted by NASA suggests using one houseplant per 100 square feet of floor space for the most effective pollution control.

Common Pollutants and their Sources

- **Formaldehyde:**
  Carpeting, pressed wood, foam insulation, fiberwood products (such as paneling), hair sprays, wax paper, paper towels and various cleaning products.

- **Benzene:**
  Glue, Spot removers, oils, paint, inks, varnish, rubber, plastic products, detergents, dyes, gasoline and paint stripper.

- **Hydrocarbons:**
  Vinyl products (such as furniture and flooring), detergents and fabric softeners.

- **Trichloroethylene:**
  Inks, paint, lacquer, varnishes, adhesives (such as rubber cement, epoxy or spray mount).

- **Methylene Chloride:**
  Paint strippers, refinishers and many aerosol products.

References:

*How to Grow Fresh Air: 50 House Plants that Purify Your Home or Office* by B.C. Wolverton

*The internet has many resources available*